

September 8th, 2011

"Thank you Mr. Chairman. First, let me say that I appreciate your respect for due process in subcommittee operations. While we have our disagreements on policy, both as Ranking Member and now as Chairman, you have always been an inclusive partner who embodies the collegial traditions of this committee and both majority and minority staff have been good about adhering to that approach.

"Second, within the constraints that have been placed upon this bill, I recognize that you have made a serious effort to produce a fair bill. In particular, I thank you for fully funding the Section 8 accounts and for not rescinding awarded funds for high speed rail projects.

However, while I recognize that your hands are tied by the budget resolution adopted by the House, ultimately the constraints placed upon this bill by the Ryan budget and the resolution are too extreme and harmful for me to support.

"Just one week after the U.S. economy reported adding no new jobs in the month of August and barely 100,000 jobs since the Ryan budget was passed, this bill willfully cuts hundreds of thousands of highway, transit and housing construction jobs. Official unemployment hovers around 9 percent and in the construction industry it is much worse at around 13.5 percent. Now is not the time to be laying off even more construction workers. They ought to be earning a paycheck and using their skills to improve our roads, bridges and transit systems.

"Furthermore, in order to create growth immediately and build the foundation for our economic future, many leading economists are calling on the federal government to make large investments in infrastructure and housing production while costs are cheap. Indeed, there has been study after study ranging from the Urban Land Institute to the American Society of Civil Engineers to DOT's own "Conditions and Performance Report" where each have detailed the need to invest more heavily in our nation's infrastructure.

"Mr. Chairman, there are specific policy issues in the mark about which I have deep concerns and will address several of those by offering amendments. More broadly, I am opposed to this

bill as drafted because I strongly oppose the policies of the Ryan budget as they are reflected in this bill. Simply put, I believe the Ryan budget sacrifices jobs and allows our national transportation infrastructure assets and federal housing assets to decay because of ideology and a perception that that provides political benefit."